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NR Record

ROMANIA: New Regime Under Fire

Spontaneous anti-Communist protests yesterday forced the National Salvation Front (FSN) to make significant concessions; it apparently has failed to win legitimacy and will probably encounter increasing opposition. Provisional President Iliescu yielded to the demands of the protesters and announced the immediate outlawing of the Communist Party and a referendum on 28 January on the death penalty. He also pledged to hold a national debate on the election law and promised to accept UN supervision of the planned national election. Hungarian media reports indicate the FSN Council in Timisoara has resigned in the face of local protests. [redacted]

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Comment: The protests against the FSN are the largest to date. Romanians are increasingly impatient with the slow pace of public trials against Ceausescu loyalists and angry about the prominence of Communist holdovers in the Front and the government. Demonstrations may intensify when university classes resume next week, and protesters may target Communist FSN leaders, including Iliescu. It will be difficult for the Front to establish legitimacy as long as it is dominated by Communists, meaning Romania may be in for a lengthy period of instability and unrest. [redacted]

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